

Braille Monitor



AUGUST, 1977

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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SEPTEMBER WILL BE THE CONVENTION ISSUE.
THE DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER IS AUGUST 10th.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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DONALD McCONNELL, *Editor*

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* * *

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REPORT ON THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS

In the history of emerging minorities, the blind have been ahead of their time. As the NFB approaches its fortieth year, the country is just beginning to develop a consciousness of the handicapped. The evidence of this can be seen in many places: the passage of legislation to ban discrimination against the handicapped, the pickets in wheelchairs outside the office of the HEW Secretary, the occasional (though not very serious) attention given to our problems by the press, and the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals. The strength which the blind have found in themselves during three decades of battles and significant victories is now spreading to other disabled minorities. It stems from a belief in the basic normality of the handicapped and a belief that progress will not come until the handicapped speak for themselves and determine their own destiny. It is, further, a belief that however well-intentioned our helpers and keepers, their goals are not the same as our goals, and if we wait for them to create independence for us, we will wait in vain.

These concepts, which are old news to the blind, were more than vindicated in our experience with the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals which took place in late May in Washington, D.C. The Conference showed the Federation at the peak of its assuredness and determination, and it showed the entire range of the handicapped ready to profit from the lessons we have learned.

Federationists are already aware of much of the background of this Conference. Authorized by Congress as part of the 1974 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, the Conference was intended to reach a consensus on the problems of the handicapped, drawing on the experience of everyone concerned—the handicapped themselves, parents, service providers, professionals, and “experts.” At the Los Angeles Convention of the NFB, Federationists already had

major reservations about what this Conference might produce. Our experience with the planning for the state conferences to be held in preparation for the national Conference was that the dominant influence would be employees of public and private agencies. Jack Smith, the executive director of the White House Conference, listened to our reservations and promised to look into them.

An article published in the March-April 1977 issue of the *Monitor* reported on the activities which took place in the months after the Convention. These activities seemed to support the concerns we had raised. The selection of delegates to the national Conference was almost without exception undemocratic; in many cases these delegates were simply named by the state rehab agencies. Organizations of the handicapped had no definite means of providing input either to this selection process or to the ideas which would be addressed in Washington.

The *Monitor* article also discussed the plans and materials being distributed by the Conference staff. Reviewing all of these, we suggested that the staff was proceeding on the notion that they were dealing with subnormals rather than with human beings with various physical limitations. At every point the staff was given the duty of “synthesizing” the input from the handicapped, and their procedures kept the handicapped occupied with busywork rather than allowing them to express their acutely felt needs.

In the weeks before the national Conference, delegates and alternates began to receive stacks of printed material for use at the Conference. The materials in inkprint were about three inches thick, the cassettes (running them nonstop) took more than fifteen hours to get through. This material was divided into workbooks, one for each “workshop,” and a workshop was devoted to each broad area of concern. They had

titles such as Economic Concerns, Health Concerns, Special Concerns I, and Special Concerns II. The workbooks contained lists of recommendations, supposedly synthesized from the state conferences.

Each delegate was assigned to one workshop, where (with two-minute time limits per speaker) the recommendations in that particular workbook would be discussed. Then delegates would retire each evening to their state caucuses and share the discussions which took place in the workshops with the other delegates from their state. Then all delegates would vote individually on each recommendation, according to a first-, second-, or third-place priority. There was no way to vote "no." An executive from IBM had been loaned to the Conference to set up a computer program to process all these votes into a final, grand "priority" of the handicapped.

The overwhelming aspect of the plan was that there were 3,522 recommendations to be dealt with in three days. Thus, each evening, the state caucuses were to discuss and vote on more than 1,000 recommendations during the course of a two-hour meeting. This would allow a little under seven seconds per recommendation.

The recommendations themselves were as disturbing as the foolish procedure set up to deal with them. It was clear in reading through the workbooks just how oriented toward the needs of professionals the Conference had become. Time and again the need for professional credentials and for more research was brought up. On the other hand, the need for consumer input to programs or for separate and specialized services for each disabled group were hard to find. Also, no distinction was made between matters of importance and trivialities. One recommendation read, for instance: "The federal government should amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include the needs of the mentally and physically handicapped." Another read: "States should study the clothing needs of handicapped individuals for the purpose of designing and distributing apparel that is easier for the handicapped

to put on and wear." Each of these, if the Conference plan were followed, would receive seven seconds' discussion and a vote of from one to three in importance.

The blind were not alone in their dismay at what was being foisted on them in the name of consultation. The protest from around the country was widespread and included all groups of the handicapped. A letter sent to Jack Smith on March 25, 1977, by John Hessler, chairman of the California state conference, reads as follows:

"DEAR JACK: The California delegation to the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals met March 19 and 20, 1977, in preparation for the meeting in May. As part of our agenda we reviewed the proposed format for the Conference, and believe there are substantial problems that need to be reviewed.

"We are particularly concerned that in addition to the proposed agenda, we have received information that the format in May precludes any changes to the recommendations and issues addressed in the workbook to be distributed in April 1977.

"On Friday, March 18, 1977, Jann Besson spoke to Louis Rigdon in your office. The main questions posed were:

"(1) Can the caucus and the workshops amend or make additions to the material in the workbook?

"(2) Can we get the names and addresses of all of the states' delegates with their workshop assignments?

"We were totally dissatisfied with the responses we received and we would like to make the following recommendations:

"(1) Open forum reports should not run concurrently with state caucus meetings.

"(2) Workshops should be permitted to pass motions which can amend the issues and recommendations in the workbooks.

"(3) The workshop and the caucus may pass motions and additional issues of concern not currently in the workbook.

"(4) Prioritizing of issues and recommendations should take place in the workshops, not in the caucus.

"(5) Motions passed by individual delegations must be brought before the entire Conference for their ratification or rejection. We propose that this can be achieved by amending the format from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 26, 1977, to allow for a voting general session. This voting can be done secretly; however, our delegation does not see the necessity for a secret ballot.

"This time slot was chosen for if the prioritizing is done in the workshops there is no need for the state caucus to meet Thursday afternoon.

"We are respectfully requesting a response to these recommendations within ten days after receipt of this letter. This response can be phoned to me with a written response to follow. You should be advised that this letter is being sent to all of the delegation directors urging them to follow suit.

"The White House Conference should represent a unique opportunity for persons with disabilities and their representatives to have direct input in the issues which effect us. Our comments are intended to ensure that the purpose of the Conference is achieved.

"We await your reply.

"Sincerely,

"JOHN HESSLER."

The reply from Jack Smith was dated March 31, 1977, and reads as follows:

"DEAR JOHN: We have reviewed your letter of March 35 in detail and do appreciate your time and interest in assuring a successful White House Conference. I believe we have responsive answers to your questions and wish to address them accordingly:

"(1) Amendments or additions to the material in the workbooks can be made in the caucus but not in the workshop. The workshops are tutorial, the caucuses are formal voting sessions.

"The procedure to accomplish a change will be spelled out in detail but plans are to permit a delegate to recommend a change, modification, or generate a new recommendation at his caucus, to have this approved

and passed, then the state director will submit this to the White House Conference staff. This will then be distributed to all delegates Friday morning with a return envelope for their vote approval by June 15. If the approval of a designated percent of the total delegates is favorable, the change will be implemented. This does not preclude a delegate discussing possible word change or other appropriate statements in a delegate forum which will be scheduled at the end of each workshop.

"(2) We cannot provide the names and addresses of all the state delegates with their workshop assignments. This has been carefully reviewed with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare legal counsel. What can be provided is the names of the delegates by state no addresses. If this is desired, please send a separate letter to my attention requesting this.

"(3) With respect to conducting general open forums concurrently with state caucus meetings, we too would prefer not to but, due to the time available, we have no other choice. The general open forums are intended for minority reports, special interests, comments, etc. not requiring delegate votes. I believe having both delegate open forums and general open forums is a revision that will appeal to all.

"(4) Prioritizing of recommendations is the right of the individual delegate. If he wishes to select the top three recommendations/issues outside of the caucus, he could do so. However, he must submit his votes through the state director at the caucus. It is also anticipated that reports at the caucus from other delegates and alternates attending other workshops will assist the delegate in his personal selections.

"(5) 'Motions passed by individual delegates' is a phrase which is not clear to us. All issues and recommendations in the workbook have been reviewed and passed by the states at their conferences. New or modified issues or recommendations at the national Conference are possible under the plan outlined above. From a national point of view, it is not the individual delegate

recommending a change but rather it is a state proposal which will be voted on by other delegates using the mail ballot.

"(6) As you will also see at the April simulation, we have changed the Thursday afternoon and evening sessions. In summary, the afternoon will be scheduled for a formal extended luncheon and later the state caucus with the evening free for personal or organizational dialogue.

"I believe we have answered your questions although I realize some details can be added at the simulation conference. We recognize that the main area of concern is for the delegates to know, understand, and be able to prioritize the recommendations submitted from all the states.

"Working together, I believe we can finalize the initial work from state conferences and achieve our mutual goals.

"Sincerely,

"JACK F. SMITH."

The "responsiveness" of this reply is open to question. Although one of the main criticisms of the state conferences had been that, even at that level, the issues to be discussed had largely been presented by the Conference staff, and that handicapped participants had to work hard to bring up any of their own concerns, now Mr. Smith regards the input process to be over with and closed. "Prioritizing" is the business of the national Conference. The Conference has set up special "open forums" for delegates to blow off steam, but these are for matters "not requiring delegate votes." Not only that, but they are scheduled at the same time as the voting sessions. Despite Jack Smith's fond wishes, the arrangement did not "appeal to all."

This response was far from placating Mr. Hessler. He enclosed the exchange of correspondence in a letter sent to Arabella Martinez, the Assistant Secretary of HEW assigned to help coordinate the Conference. That letter read, in part:

"Jack's response, and events subsequent to our written exchange, lead me to conclude that the White House Conference on

Handicapped Individuals will be used to rubber-stamp decisions already made.

"Jack claims the workshops will be tutorial. If they follow the same format used in the recent training session for state directors, the only lesson learned will be that pushing people around only leads to frustration and anger. In short, workshops must be made more flexible, debate encouraged, changes desired.

"I have included a resolution signed by almost all of the state directors who attended the White House Conference training session recently held in Washington, D.C. It clearly points out the level of frustration felt by many of us. It also underlines the fact that we feel the final report coming out of the Conference will not accurately reflect the views and concerns of those who participated.

"One final comment. The approach currently demanded by the White House Conference steering committee is one which fragments and divides. This runs counter to everything our movement has worked towards. We need time to debate the larger issues: how to assure full participation in this society; national support service systems; our role in government, to suggest a few. As currently proposed, there is no time for unity or comprehension, but there is time for an extended luncheon."

The striking thing in Jack Smith's reply to John Hessler is his statement that the workshops—the major portion of the Conference—were to be "tutorial." In other words, the delegates were to be instructed about their own concerns. This seemed amazing to us, considering the stated purpose of the Conference. It seemed to reflect an insulting conception of the ability of handicapped persons to speak for themselves. Yet as time went on, Jack Smith repeated this notion often enough for us to realize that it was not simply a slip on his part, but a firmly held belief and the basis on which he had put together the entire Conference.

If we go back to the discussion session held after Mr. Smith's speech at the Los Angeles Convention (as published in the September 1976 *Monitor*) we find this same idea. In response to a question about whether the Conference were likely to produce a recommendation for umbrella rehab agencies, Mr. Smith replied as follows:

"I think that is a possibility. I think that we are going to have to do a job—and we can control this more at the national level—of educating those delegates to the real facts of life, and I think that is something we are going to have to do particularly in this area, and frankly, in many others. There is not the same kind of sophistication. I'm afraid, that this group has shown in terms of problems and their solutions."

The fact that Mr. Smith was assuring us of his support for what we consider a vital issue fooled at least this writer into ignoring what he was actually saying. At a press conference held by Mr. Smith after the White House Conference was over, he repeated this same idea in almost the same language. He said that his conception of the Conference had been to bring the handicapped together, educate them, and put them in contact with each other.

Mr. Smith's notion throughout, then, was that the handicapped are still a dormant minority, vaguely discontent but essentially unknowledgeable about their needs. If the Conference were to produce a final report, then it would have to depend largely on the professionals who have had long experience in dealing with the handicapped. And the report had better be pretty much written before these ignorant disabled people, routed out of their rest homes and hideaways, even come to town.

Jack Smith was later to claim that the NFB came to Washington with the purpose of disrupting the Conference. He believed we had prejudged his plans without waiting to see what they were. But as all the foregoing indicates, the problem with the Conference was that the staff had prejudged the handicapped. The structure of the Conference was such that most of the

work had been done before we left home. At the least, there was no part of the process which could be identified as truly open or democratic.

As the criticism of the Conference philosophy built up in the months prior to the actual event, Jack Smith became increasingly defensive of what he had wrought. As early as last fall, he published the following statement in the Conference's national newsletter:

"There has been and it has increased in recent years—monumental cynicism and criticism about almost everything. Very often those who know little or nothing about a program or a conference such as this will find ways to be critical and negative. It is time to ignore the Prophets of Doom." As with Mr. Smith's remarks about the need for education—that we needed the education—it was only later that we realized the "Prophets of Doom" were the handicapped themselves.

As the Conference drew nearer and the criticism increased, instead of dealing with it, the Conference staff devised measures to deal with the "disrupters." A sheet of instructions to be read by the moderator of each workshop at the opening session contained the following:

"Continual violation by a delegate in ignoring the mike and addressing or attempting to disrupt other delegates, or myself, will necessitate corrective action involving: Requesting the delegation director to substitute a permanent alternate for the offender; or requesting the individual to leave the room and no alternate substitution. The reasons for this rule are obvious. With recommendations to review, understand, and vote on, a very heavy workload and extreme time demand is imposed on each delegate. You are here to represent all the handicapped individuals from your state and your time cannot be wasted or distracted by the possibility of a few, perhaps well-meaning but still disruptive, individuals."

This is consensus-reaching with a vengeance!

All of this discussion shows what the

Conference was not likely to do; namely, allow free input from participants or hold democratic forums. But even more disturbing were the indications of what it *would* do. Again, these indications could be clearly seen in the material circulated by the Conference staff and in the publicity generated in the weeks prior to the Conference. If the staff doubted the mental capacities of the handicapped participants, they were even more likely to doubt their physical capacities. And doubt them they did. As President Jernigan later characterized it, the staff imagined that each handicapped person had all of the physical limitations of *every* handicap, and they made their plans accordingly.

Public Law 93-516, which authorized the Conference, required that as far as possible, handicapped persons be involved in the Conference planning. It might be presumed that this was partly to ensure some expertise in the arrangements to be made. For reasons best known to Jack Smith, the Conference contracted with a private firm—Moshman Associates, Inc.—to handle all of the logistics for the meeting.

Whether Moshman Associates' inexperience with handicaps was the reason for the smothering custodialism, or whether it was due to misconceptions of the Conference staff, it is difficult to say. But Moshman arranged the travel plans, lodging, and meals of the delegates with the care appropriate to intensive-care patients. It is useful to keep several things in mind as we discuss these arrangements. First, consider what handicaps were involved in the Conference. As misguided as we know it to be, it is probably safe to say that blindness was regarded as one of the most disabling conditions. Blindness, of course, does not limit mobility and blind persons do not require any special travel arrangements. The same is true of deaf persons, epileptics, those with cerebral palsy or speech impairments, little people, or ex-mental patients. Those in wheelchairs are used to traveling on airlines, though they require slight modifications to hotels to gain access to them. This writer saw one person at the Conference on a rolling stretcher,

and undoubtedly some few other delegates were nearly totally paralyzed. Yet remember that those who required constant care were reimbursed for bringing an attendant.

Also, compare the arrangements set up for this Conference with those for other federal conferences. Normally, participants make their own arrangements throughout—travel, lodging, meals, entertainment—and are reimbursed by the government on a per diem basis. Not so this Conference. All travel arrangements were made by Moshman Associates. Weeks before the delegates were to leave for Washington, they received detailed medical and travel questionnaires asking for information totally irrelevant to making airline reservations, or to any other reasonable purpose.

Beginning by asking for age, race, and handicap, the questionnaire moved on to the following: "Describe handicaps and indicate any limitation which may affect your full participation in the Conference. Specify what (if any) personal assistance you will require due to a disability. Is there anything in particular you want us to know about your medical needs or health in general? If you think we should know your physician's name, please specify. How will you travel to the Conference? Which transportation terminal is most accessible to you from your home? Is there anything in particular that you want us to know about your needs when traveling? All motorized wheelchairs transported via air must be equipped with spillproof batteries. Is yours spillproof? If No, can you obtain a spillproof battery? Do you use a respirator and plan to carry a supply of medical oxygen to the Conference? Will you be bringing a guide dog to the Conference?"

Beyond the fact that most of these are none of the Conference's business, consider whether someone who needs to carry medical oxygen in order to remain alive might not be assumed to be fairly familiar with his or her needs in this respect. More appropriate than this questionnaire would have been a single statement: Delegates who wish to make special arrangements should contact

Moshman Associates.

But this was just the beginning. The information submitted on the questionnaires was made up into dossiers which were sent to the airlines. Thus, when an Iowa delegate called the airport to confirm his reservation, the airline agent said, "Oh yes, we know all about you; you're blind." We have been negotiating with airlines for the last year, trying to get them to realize that blind travelers need no special treatment. Most of all, we have been fighting the notion that the blind should give airlines prior notice of their blindness. The procedure developed by the Conference has probably undermined our efforts as much as anything could, particularly since the Conference speaks with the authority of the federal government.

Some time later, delegates received their airline tickets from Moshman. With the ticket was a so-called "speciman ticket." This was filled out for "John P. Doe," and just in case the ignorant delegate might not get the point, it was further labeled, "Your Name." Then a series of memos were sent to the delegates, each explaining in greater and more insulting detail how to travel. Here are some quotations from these memos:

"We anticipate that your trip will be smooth and trouble-free. However, to make sure that every precaution is taken, it is suggested that you carry with you on the airplane an extra prescription for medications you may need, and a duplicate set of instruments or portable equipment, just in case your baggage should be temporarily lost."

"If you intend to bring a guide dog it would be best to bring a sufficient quantity of dog food since your dog may prefer a particular type and dog food will probably be in limited supply at the hotel." [Note that this Conference was to take place in a major metropolitan area. Moshman must have assumed that blind delegates would let their dogs starve rather than dare to leave the hotel.]

"Please check to make sure that you have not left any parcels or other belongings on the plane. If you have left something on

the plane, *immediately* advise the airline representative who will assist you in recovering the article."

"Please remember that it is customary to tip sky caps 25¢ per bag."

"A medical facility will be operated in Room R-828 of the Sheraton-Park Motor Inn during the Conference. It will be staffed on a 24-hour basis with physicians and nurses. Individuals requiring assistance may phone X-7828 or X-7829 or proceed directly to the center. Arrangements have been made with a nearby hospital for reception and treatment of more serious cases that cannot be handled at the medical center in the hotel."

This notion of the handicapped as hospital patients pervaded the Conference. When Joyce Scanlan arrived at the Sheraton-Park, she was forced to wait half an hour while the staff looked for what they called her "chart."

Meanwhile, in Washington, the newspapers were full of the special alterations being made to the Sheraton-Park Hotel. In fact, the majority of the press coverage of the Conference had to do with what was depicted as an exhaustive renovation of the hotel. Some of these were necessary, but very minor, such as the installation of ramps for wheelchairs. The Conference staff, however, boasted of the following arrangements for blind persons: "The entire hotel will have large raised letter/number signs for blind delegates." Also provided were touch-tone telephones, and for those with some vision, enlarged dials! (To do the hotel credit, this writer could find none of these enlarged dials.)

What was the result of all this over-protection? Putting to one side the humiliation and inconvenience to the handicapped themselves, the result was to publish far and wide—to hotels, airlines, and the general public—the notion that the handicapped require special treatment. And not just a little special treatment: They need 24-hour-a-day nurses! What point is there in holding a Conference to focus public attention on the needs of the handicapped when such

false needs are so demeaningly publicized. We assumed that the needs meant by Congress were the needs for jobs, for equal treatment, for adequate income, for first-class citizenship. Whatever the Conference staff may have believed they were doing for us, the effect of the Conference—at least in terms of the image projected to the public—was undoubtedly to make it harder for handicapped persons to gain employment on equal terms or even to be given a chance to prove themselves. Employers will more than ever reply, “Well, I’d like to hire you, but who will pay for the nurse?”

A notion that the handicapped cannot use normal hotel facilities and that they could by no means find restaurants on their own resulted in more special arrangements. The Conference staff decided that all delegates would have to stay at the Conference hotel and would have to eat all their meals there. And since so many delegates were involved, the staff assigned them two to a room, and even assigned who they would room with. One blind woman, for instance, was assigned a roommate in a wheelchair in a room that had been modified by removing the bathroom door and replacing it with a shower curtain. This was because the staff had devised a “buddy” system. They avoided putting two blind persons together or two wheelchair users. The idea was that the blind person would help the wheelchair user, who in return would provide sight for the blind person. Who knows what gruesome accidents might not occur were two blind persons put together at least this was the thinking of the staff. We point out that this “innovation” was commonplace in the middle ages, when a crippled beggar would ride on the shoulders of a blind beggar. For the last 600 years or so, however, we have preferred to take care of ourselves.

The Conference meal plan involved not only eating all meals at the hotel, but eating them at assigned times and in assigned groups (corresponding to the workshops).

These eating and lodging procedures inspired more protest than any other arrangement. After letters were sent to the Confer-

ence by the governors of several states, the procedures were relaxed a little. But there were still gross inequities which have yet to be adequately explained. For instance, the hotel was paid \$28 per day for each delegate’s meals. Delegates not using the meal-ticket system were reimbursed only \$16 per day. Alternates were still required to abide by the original Conference plan. These procedures, of course, were unique to this Conference, including the enforced roommate arrangement. As Ed Foscue wrote to Jack Smith: “Because we do have our own individual disabilities, must we be treated as if we were a group of children on an outing, being led, protected, and guarded, with every meal, minute, and movement accounted for? In Washington State our conference was managed smoothly and efficiently without custodialism. Why can’t it be done that way in Washington, D.C.?”

Is it any wonder, then, that the handicapped came to town angered and determined to let the Conference staff know how we felt? It was not, as Jack Smith later claimed to the press, that we came prepared to disrupt the Conference; but it was clear that much damage had already been done, and not by the handicapped. And it also seemed that the Conference itself was so tightly structured that meaningful input from the handicapped—the one thing which could retrieve the Conference—was going to be difficult.

There were about 30 Federationists at the Conference, out of the nearly 3,000 persons involved in all. Some were delegates, some were alternates or observers, and some had come with spouses or friends (*not*, we might add, as attendants). President Jernigan was present as a delegate from Iowa, Dick Edlund as a delegate at large, and Executive Committee members Rami Rabby, Beth Bowen, Sue Ammeter, and Joyce Scanlan as delegates from their states. E. U. Parker was also there as a delegate at large. Our group arrived Sunday and Monday, May 22 and 23, and met Monday afternoon to decide what, if anything, we should do. We decided to see if our own dissatisfaction was general

or confined to our group. We also decided to wait and see what the Conference itself would bring. The Conference staff was well aware of the widespread distrust of its rigid procedures and it was not clear whether they would change these to any meaningful degree.

Sunday night we had prepared a brief statement giving our doubts about what had been set up, and Monday afternoon we arranged for this to be printed. The leaflet suggested that a meeting could be held later in the week to discuss the concerns of delegates, and it asked anyone who thought this would be desirable to get in touch with us at the Sheraton-Park. At that point, there was no way of knowing whether there would be interest in such a meeting, or whether the Conference would make one necessary, so this was the only action we took at that time.

The dedication of Federationists is nothing new to anyone familiar with the movement. But the energy and effectiveness of the small group in Washington during this week was the wonder of both the Conference staff and the other handicapped groups in attendance. From the time of the Monday meeting we manned (or womanned) the room listed on our leaflet around the clock. That night, a handful of Federationists slipped the leaflet under the door of each of the roughly 1,500 rooms in the Sheraton-Park.

At first there was little response from other Conference participants. This was so for a number of reasons. Monday evening was the formal opening session of the Conference, and the speakers included President Carter, HEW Secretary Califano, and other VIPs. Carter was especially impressive, working the crowd, and delivering lines such as, "The time for discrimination against the handicapped is at an end." Less impressive to us was the talk (echoed by Secretary Califano) which hinted at streamlining service delivery by conglomerating programs. But to a segment of the population which has traditionally been excluded from consideration by the powers of the country,

this session gave a hope for the future that was hard to discount. At the beginning of his speech, President Carter carried on an exchange with the audience that went roughly like this: "Are we making progress?" The crowd cheered, but many shouted "no." Then: "Are we going to change that?" The crowd cheered. "Are we going to make it?" The crowd roared, and President Carter joined in with a "Right On!"

Another factor in the initial lack of response was an extension of this feeling of powerlessness, and it came up again and again during the week. It can best be stated by quoting one delegate who said to us: "They're paying my way, and I have to do what they want." It must be added that this was an emotion which was reinforced by the officials of the Conference and even more by the representatives of state agencies. By the end of the week there was evidence of more than one case of blatant coercion to force delegates to stay in line, or more specifically, to stay away from us. One person working actively with us was threatened with loss of employment if he did not withdraw at once from any protest activity.

But as Tuesday came and the "tutorial" workshops began, with all their recommendations and other mickey-mouse, delegates began to understand that what we had feared was in fact true: that this Conference was not a democratic forum but a rubber-stamp for the foregone conclusions of the staff. During the day on Tuesday, we had printed several thousand badges with the text "I'm dissatisfied with this Conference." In smaller letters, it read: "Custodialism—Confused—Cop-out." Federationists passed these out in their state caucuses and to anyone who asked why they were wearing them. That night, we went into action again, distributing badges and another leaflet to every room in the hotel.

By Wednesday morning, it was clear there was ample support for a meeting that day, and that the blind were far from alone in their dissatisfaction.

In one of the workshops, after angry disputes, a body of delegates walked out and

refused to participate further. On all sides, caucuses were formed to discuss particular complaints. There was a non-white caucus whose members felt they had been virtually excluded from input to the recommendations. A women's caucus was angered for the same reason. Even more common was frustration with the computer voting. As mentioned, delegates were to vote in their state caucuses, with seven seconds allowed for discussion of each item to be voted on. Many delegates filled in the first few boxes on the voting forms and then gave up. Others (and this was the commonest occurrence) simply voted only on those recommendations of interest to them. Many of the state caucuses were occupied with bitter wrangling about the Conference, and in no cases was there opportunity for adequate discussion of the issues. Many of the delegates refused to vote at all. (It can be estimated from all of this just how representative and accurate a consensus will be produced by the computer which will tally these votes.)

The Conference staff made concessions to the protests about the rigid structure by holding "open forums" at the end of each day. They also allowed the workshops to amend their own procedures. Yet these were meaningless concessions, for nothing said or done in either the forums or the workshops would have an effect on the final Conference report. As a further concession to protest from delegates and state directors, it was decided to hold a special plenary session on the last night of the Conference to consider resolutions submitted by delegates. If passed by the whole Conference, these were to have some effect (no one could say exactly what effect) on the final report. During the week, these resolutions poured in by the scores.

We made a decision to hold a meeting Wednesday afternoon to discuss this general dissatisfaction and determine whether anything could be done. This was held in an exhibit hall at the hotel at 1:00 p.m. Between 350 and 400 persons attended. When you consider that of the 2,500 officially

attending the Conference, fewer than half were handicapped, and that our meeting (which became known as the Alternative Conference) was primarily handicapped persons, it will be clear that this meeting received very widespread support from the disabled. The press were invited, and throughout the afternoon there were reporters and cameramen in the room. There were also a number of what could be called sightseers, mainly non-handicapped agency people, who milled around at the door. Also present for a short time were the leaders of the American Council of the Blind; but when they were later invited to be on a writing committee, no ACB member was still in the room. Of course, it is part and parcel of ACB's purpose as an organization to play along with any official bureaucracy for whatever tidbits of support or recognition they can glean. So ACB was probably happy as could be with the Conference.

The meeting itself gave the lie to all the misconceptions held by Jack Smith and the Conference staff. With no federal money and with no predetermined structure, the handicapped of the nation came together, conducted themselves with dignity and intelligence, and in a 28-hour period produced what the Conference will never be able to produce: a concise yet comprehensive platform of the needs and recommendations of America's handicapped citizens. Amazing as it would seem to Mr. Smith, the disabled do know their needs, they do have the expertise to focus on the areas of government policy which need changing, and they are able to meet in democratic session and coherently discuss these issues without the suffocating guidance of bureaucratic custodians.

To provide readers with a sense of these sessions, we print here some excerpts from the Alternative Conference. The group met for four hours on Wednesday. The meeting was opened by President Jernigan, but he soon put it to the group to elect its own chairman. He was elected unanimously. The session, in its first hour, heard from several people who had come to deride the

group and, among other things, to suggest that we go home. After listening to these speakers for some time (including the reading of a resolution condemning us), the chairman refused to permit more of it and the session was turned over to the handicapped delegates and their ideas. Here are some of the statements made, beginning with President Jernigan's opening remarks.

Mr. Jernigan: Let me talk about why some of us called this meeting. We called it because we're not satisfied with the way this Conference is being operated, and we're not satisfied with what we see coming out of it as the image of handicapped people. We do not quarrel with those who feel that the Conference is going well—that is their right. In a democracy people ought to have a right to express their views. We feel that, on the other hand, those of us who are seeking an alternative have a right to hold a meeting and decide what we want to decide.

Now, quickly, the reason I'm dissatisfied with this Conference: I believe that in the past, one of the problems that has kept handicapped persons from achieving equal status in society has been governmental red tape and manipulation, and I believe this Conference, which was billed as a conference for the handicapped to express their views, has more red tape and more manipulation and more bureaucracy than any conference I've ever seen. [Applause.] Because of that, and with no personal ill will toward anyone, a number of us feel that the image of handicapped persons which is coming out of this Conference, and the opportunity for handicapped persons really to express themselves, is not good. And we want, therefore, to consider alternatives.

I am minded of a poem which is four lines long which was written by Paul Lawrence Dunbar when I think about this Conference and the way at least I perceive it. The poem goes something to this effect: "The poor man came to the rich man's door. / 'I come as Lazarus,' he said. / The rich man humbly bowed his head, / 'I will send my dogs to lick your sores.'"

However you may feel about it, the Conference is what it is, and some of us have come here to discuss it. What, then, will be the format of this meeting? Well, it will be this: It will be whatever the people who are here assembled, who feel some dissatisfaction with the way things are going, want it to be. That is, we can meet for another ten minutes and adjourn and decide we don't want to do anything. We can decide we want to pass resolutions. We can decide we want to submit some kind of alternative report. We can decide we wish to take some joint action which will be reflected in the workshops—not in a disruptive or hostile manner, but in a direct, democratic manner. We can decide we want to do something in concert in our state caucuses. We can decide something else.

I think that this is my opening statement. There are many numbers of reasons why I'm dissatisfied with the Conference. But there's no point in my talking about that further.

Adrian Glenn: I'm from Massachusetts. I think that it's very important to have this meeting, and I think that Jack Smith should be here but not speak, and all the staff of the White House Conference. Maybe we can't do anything now because it is too late. But the next White House Conference—I wouldn't want to waste my time here because I am very dissatisfied. And if we can't do anything, at least let's before the next conference. And I'm glad there's a large turnout today, and I would say this before the press, too, because I'm not afraid to speak out the truth. I have done that all my life—but I think this is the worst conference of my life. I had to give up lots of my activities to come down here, and I feel the handicapped do not have any [part] of this, mostly the professional people. [Applause.] Okay, I appreciate if you let me finish, because I do have a speech defect. I feel that if we discuss what can be done for the next conference and bring it to the White House staff, maybe the next conference will understand. *We're* important, not the professional people, because I don't

care about the professional people.

I came down here to speak my piece, and I can't even do that in the state caucus, and I'm an alternate. So please, spread the word. I feel that the White House Conference staff should be here and listen to our complaints. We're not machines and I don't think we should be treated like machines. And that's been all through this—in Boston, everywhere.

Marc Maurer: I think that what I'd hoped we could establish by the Conference is that the disabled have the right to speak for the disabled. In many states—in my state and in a number of other states—the delegates were selected by some process that the disabled had no input into. The issues that were given to us were issues that the disabled in an organized fashion had no input to. The process of voting here doesn't mean a thing really unless you can get into the very highest echelons of it all and by then you're in the White House Conference staff and the directors, who were appointed and not elected by us. I think essentially what we need to do in this meeting is to establish some opposition to what has happened so far, that we have a right to speak for ourselves in a direct, democratic manner, and not let somebody else tell us what we've said.

Gary Olson: I am speaking for the deaf people and we want to work with all of you. We share a lot of dissatisfaction with you. As a group we have come here from a long way and many of us have been discriminated against and our ideas have been thrown out. We want to recommend something to you which we feel will help both you and all other disabled people to succeed in the long run. [At this point, Mr. Olson introduced the resolution which is printed later in this issue as part of the Alternative Conference Report under the heading "Recognition of Unique Needs." It was discussed and adopted by the group.]

E. U. Parker: Here is a problem, and let's get it down real simple, and it is: Who benefits? the handicapped people or the keepers

of the handicapped? And really, it doesn't matter whether the keepers are handicapped themselves. Some of our most horrible examples of keepers of the handicapped are state directors; and honestly, they have come here with an obvious intention of disrupting this meeting. I don't think they ought to be hushed up like I was hushed up last night in the delegate-at-large meeting. I don't think we ought to tell them, like they did there, that we have none of the rights to do any of the things the literature said we had to do. We had to vote right on the spot even though the information that was promised had not been furnished. [Mr. Parker refers here to the fact that he was not able to get the workbooks in Braille until he arrived at the Conference.] And the poor coordinator apologized that he understood, but he was under orders too, he said; and I presume that's right.

I wish to move that the chair, with the advice of the different disability groups appoint a committee to formally write a minority report, and have a document of some sort drawn up by disabled people for what *they* want, for what *they* believe they need, and not for what somebody who makes a living out of it thinks we need. [The motion was seconded and passed by the group.]

Harold Snider: I was asked to participate on the National Consumers Advisory Task Force. I do not represent consumers. I am a provider as well as a consumer, but I am not an elected representative of consumers. Neither were most of the people who were on that National Consumers Advisory Task Force. . . .

The needs, the issues that were brought to the task force, which were put in the workbooks, were the issues which were prioritized by the White House Conference staff. We had a look at those issues, and we told Jack Smith—at least a goodly number of us did—that those issues just didn't seem right to a lot of us. And did he listen to us? No, he didn't. So that meeting, as with this Conference, I'm afraid, is full of sound and fury signifying nothing.

Mary Sloan Jones: I'm Mary Sloan Jones from Winston-Salem, North Carolina. I'm representing the handicapped there, especially the ones who have epileptic seizures. I went to the workshop the other day; they're trying to change it to "hidden handicaps," and I disagreed on that. You go in to get a job and you put on the application "hidden handicap," and the man don't know *what's* hidden about you. And when I got up to let them know about it, they want to get mad, and one of the boys in there wanted to cuss me. But I've been doing work in Winston-Salem going on 12 years, getting places for the handicapped, getting them jobs. So many of them can't get medication stickers, and I just think it's high time—I'm really disappointed. What have I got to carry back to Winston-Salem? I haven't got *nothing* to carry back! I see all of this money they've put into the literature. They could start action and do work instead of putting out all this. That's where we ought to have the money.

Judy Heumann: I just got a message. I am—was—in the Education Workshop, which was an absolute bust. And we've been writing resolutions. And I was just informed that the resolution that I wrote was not acceptable because it isn't on one page, double-spaced typed paper. It's on two pages, so it's not admissible information.

This is the kind of stuff that we absolutely have to get stopped. And I think that the frustration that many of us have gone through, as has already been stated, is that the workbooks themselves have not been tools by which we can get [across] substantive information. I think that one of the prime purposes of this Conference is to be able to develop comprehensive statements, not just one-line statements, but comprehensive statements which can include implementation information. So that in fact when it is sent to the Congress it is not left up to interpretation by somebody sitting in an office who was not here, but that the information which is presented is clear and direct, and that's one of the prime reasons why I oppose the concept of the workbooks.

Mr. Jernigan: They're the bingo books.

Ms. Heumann: The bingo books, excuse me, wrong name. In February there were a group of us who were brought into Washington. I think it was called a consumer task force, and we were theoretically brought in here to (1) assess the hotel, and (2) to do a review of the process which was going to be followed within the workshops. And at that point many of us highlighted all the problems that we have seen coming down over the last couple of days. And I think that it's imperative upon the people in this room to take on a responsibility to really develop the kind of materials that our constituents at home want developed.

Carrying out the mandate of this first session, a writing committee was formed to produce what was to be called the Alternative Conference Report. Representatives of the handicapped groups present proposed members for the committee. The committee of 19 comprised the following handicaps: three blind persons, two deaf persons, three persons in wheelchairs, three former mental patients, two epileptics, two persons with cerebral palsy, one amputee, one person with a learning disability, and one parent of a handicapped child. In addition, two members represented the non-white caucus and two were veterans. Some members had more than one handicap. The committee was chaired by James Gashel. It met for several hours after the general session adjourned, and then it split up into committees to produce platform planks in the form of resolutions. At eleven that night, Jim Gashel, assisted by the *Monitor* editor (who had been appointed secretary of the committee), retired to the NFB office to work the planks into a report. They finished the next morning in time to meet with the whole committee and receive input on what they had done. Then Thursday afternoon the report was read to the second meeting of the Alternative Conference.

The report was read in full and amended extensively. At the end, a number of resolu-

tions were introduced from the floor. Some were debated at great length, and most were adopted and added to the report. Then the report as a whole was adopted and the group directed that it be distributed far and wide. During the session, President Jernigan commented on the process going on, and said of the report:

"Incidentally, even though this was written on a quick, ad hoc basis by a committee we put together yesterday afternoon, and even though that was the case and it was done last night overnight, I challenge the whole federal bureaucracy to come up with a statement as good. You know, you talk about who did preplanning and made up their minds ahead of time. They wrote their statements and spent our tax dollars by the hundreds of thousands to get their statements. And in one night session, we, the disabled in this group, put together our statement; and let's put it alongside what they come out with and I have no doubt which one's going to make more sense and be more concise."

This, of course, was the lesson of the whole week. The time is past when the disabled can be spoken for by professionals or by bureaucrats. We have found our voice and we know how to use it.

There is little more to be told. The Alternative Conference Report has been submitted to the Conference, to the Congress, and to the President. At the end of this article, a summary of the report is printed. The summary is one which was distributed to the press on Friday after the close of the Conference. Printed in full are the sections of the report of particular interest to Federalists—the section on the need for separate services to meet unique needs (which was introduced by the deaf and strongly supported by all categories of the handicapped), the section on consumer representation, and the resolution introduced and passed Thursday dealing with payment of the minimum wage to sheltered shopworkers.

Thursday evening, the last day of the White House Conference, the special plenary session was held. As noted, this was to be

the one time when issues would be debated and voted on by a gathering of all of the participants in the Conference. It did not happen. Before a single resolution could be dealt with, there came a motion to adjourn the session. The next two hours were devoted to a rollcall vote which went in favor of the motion. Thus did the Conference end. Now the 157 resolutions have been mailed to delegates who will vote yes or no by mail. So the record is complete—at no point from beginning to end was there any opportunity for democratic discussion and voting by the Conference as a whole.

What then was accomplished by this first White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals? It will be months yet before the Final Report of the Conference is ready. When this is published, we will know how much the staff learned from its experience (for no one can doubt that the Final Report will be substantially the work of the staff). We feel that little concrete good was accomplished by the whole hollow charade. The government has made a show of focusing its attention on the problems of the handicapped, but this was not done in a meaningful way. The likeliest result will be that the government will feel it has done enough. The impetus to realize that it has in fact done almost nothing will have to come from the handicapped themselves. On the other hand, the government may have learned that we insist on having input in our own affairs.

The obvious and concrete *harm* done to our cause has already been discussed. The demeaning image of the handicapped circulated far and wide by the staff as they publicly patted themselves on the back, the emphasis which the Final Report will almost certainly place on useless research and professional credentialing these are setbacks we must work harder than ever to overcome.

But this is not the whole story. Before the Conference, we said that it was potentially the greatest threat to the progress of the blind in recent history. This cannot be said to have happened. But it did not

happen only because the blind did not allow it to happen. It was to meet such threats that we have been organizing and growing in strength for nearly 40 years. We can defend ourselves as well as speak for ourselves. And behold, we are no longer alone. The message of this Conference was that people with handicaps of every kind are now on the move. When the need arises they are ready to join with us, to work to-

gether with us, to promote our common vital concerns. And the inevitable conclusion is that, not today perhaps, but some time soon, (to paraphrase President Carter) discrimination against the handicapped will be at an end, and we will take our rightful places as first-class members of American society, sharing in its fruits as well as its frustrations. We know who we are, and we will never go back. □

ALTERNATIVE REPORT OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS

Note: Only parts of the report are printed in full. The rest of the report is summarized. Copies of the complete report can be obtained from the National Office.

RECOGNITION OF UNIQUE NEEDS

Whereas handicapped consumers of this country believe that blanket legislation, recommendations, and approaches toward concerns and issues affecting all handicapped groups tend to generate confusion and to be lacking in specific definition; and

Whereas some of the issues inherent in each category of the handicapped reflect diametrically opposite problems; and

Whereas sighted persons do not always know what is best for blind people, and orthopedically handicapped persons rightfully resent unwarranted determinations of their needs from able-bodied people, and deaf persons do not always agree with hearing people regarding what is best for deaf children and adults:

Be it resolved that the issues and concerns at the Conference be analyzed and grouped according to each specific handicap in order to more fully and properly meet the needs of each handicapped group; and

Be it further resolved that all delegates, alternates, state directors, the Conference implementation committee, and report editors give full and careful consideration to position papers and recommendations from specific groups of the handicapped and particularly from established consumer

organizations represented by and under the leadership of handicapped individuals themselves.

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

Whereas the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals was brought about for the purpose of providing avenues through which handicapped persons could secure full independence and freedom of expression; and

Whereas traditionally the decision-making structures—the policy-making boards and governing bodies—of agencies and programs serving the handicapped have largely excluded representatives chosen by the handicapped themselves; and

Whereas this approach is no longer acceptable in the new age of independence for the handicapped:

Be it resolved that all programs and services must in the future adopt policies which provide for meaningful consumer representation in their basic policy-making processes; and

Be it further resolved that meaningful consumer participation requires that at least fifty percent of those serving on policy-making bodies be bonafide consumer representatives, plus, where this is appropriate, an additional number of parents of consumers. We define the terms "consumer" and "consumer representative" as follows:

A "consumer" is defined as an individual who by reason of his handicap is eligible

for, may require, has received, or is a recipient of some kind of human service including medical, mental, rehabilitation, housing, transportation, etc., as provided by an agency.

A "consumer group" is defined as a group of consumers who have joined together for the general welfare of their membership.

A "consumer representative" is an individual who represents a constituency, is elected by them, and is accountable to them.

MINIMUM WAGE IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS

Whereas our society, as expressed through an act of Congress, has determined that there should be a minimum wage paid to all workers; and

Whereas the current Fair Labor Standards Act provides that handicapped workers in sheltered workshops can be paid as little as 25 percent of the congressionally established statutory minimum wage; and

Whereas the minimum wage was established so that workers would have economic stability above the subsistence level; and

Whereas it costs at least as much and generally more for handicapped persons to maintain economic stability above the subsistence level as it costs for non-handicapped persons; and

Whereas sheltered workshop managements use the subminimum wage provisions to support poor business management paid for by the sweat, the tears, the labor, and the frustration of the handicapped workers:

Be it resolved that we call upon Congress to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to extend the benefits of the federal statutory minimum wage to handicapped workers in sheltered workshops.

SUMMARY OF OTHER SECTIONS OF THE ALTERNATIVE CONFERENCE REPORT

In the area of financial support systems, it was noted that the current welfare structure contains strong disincentives for the handicapped to try to become employed.

In many cases employment results in financial loss. It was declared that support programs (particularly medical assistance programs) should be structured so there is no loss of income or medical benefits for becoming employed.

Regarding employment, the recent non-discrimination statutes passed by Congress (sections 501, 503, and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended) were criticized for not requiring goals and timetables for the employment of the handicapped. It was declared that the handicapped should be involved directly in the implementation of these sections, and that the sections should be strengthened to require specific goals.

Civil rights assumed a high priority. It was unanimously felt that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all other civil rights and affirmative action laws and regulations should be amended to include the handicapped. The handicapped are a minority, just as blacks and women are minorities, and they suffer already from being treated as a class apart. The feeling was that the current legislation aimed at protecting the civil rights of the handicapped was separate from and therefore not equal to legal protections for other minorities.

It was declared that programs for ombudspersons should be established and staffed by the handicapped to monitor all programs for the handicapped.

With regard to education, it was recommended that alternatives be made available. Mainstreaming (placement of the handicapped in regular classrooms and giving them access to all educational and recreational programs) was supported as a right, but this was seen as meaningless unless full support services were provided to children availing themselves of this right. But the need of some handicapped children for separate programs was also supported as a right. The deaf in particular felt the need for separate and strongly supported residential schools where constant communication for deaf children could occur to develop communication skills and end isolation.

Communication barriers received separate consideration, and it was declared that alternate modes such as sign language and Braille should be supported. The expansion of Right-to-Read programs for cultural minorities was also recommended.

With regard to architectural and transportation barriers, the need for Total Environmental Design rather than merely the removal of barriers was stressed. Full use by the mobility impaired is the goal rather than merely access. Accessibility to all public transportation was recommended, with immediate and strengthened goals. Consumer input and monitoring were seen as important elements of this. Also needed are expanded powers for both federal and local compliance boards.

With regard to mental health and the rights of those termed mentally ill, the total banning of electro-shock therapy and psychosurgery were urged, as well as limits on the use of drug therapy. Institutionalization was seen as a major barrier to successful emotional therapy; and it was recommended that no new mental institutions be constructed, urging instead the setting-

up and funding of small, community-located, consumer-directed facilities. The employment barriers created for those who have been institutionalized or labeled mentally ill were deplored; and the report criticized the mental health industry as having a stake in certain therapies and practices which are not helpful to patients.

The necessity of changing public attitudes toward the handicapped was emphasized, with all forms of the public media being urged to present the handicapped realistically rather than as objects of pity. The goal was seen not to be the liking of all handicapped persons, but rather the possibility of their being seen as people with certain characteristics, and being judged on their own merits.

Other resolutions urged that future White House Conferences address the problems of handicapped women; that recreation programs and public park facilities not discriminate against the handicapped; that pregnancy records be saved by hospitals to aid in the treatment and control of birth defects; and that medicines clearly and understandably warn users of their possible dangers. □

IT'S LAW NOW: WASHINGTON STATE GETS A COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

by SCOTT H. LEWIS

After more than seven years of intense legislative struggle, Washington State has its own Commission for the blind. But the battle is just beginning, state Federationists are now saying; the real work has just begun. Governor Dixy Lee Ray, who signed the bill into law May 20, agrees.

The new Commission, which will go into effect 90 days after the legislature adjourns, will emerge from State Services for the Blind, currently under the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), an umbrella agency. The Commission will represent not only a new start and fresh hope for the state's blind, but also the first significant breakaway from the huge DSHS. It will establish a precedent other groups have

been waiting for, and perhaps begin the process of disassembling the monolithic social and health services agency.

When the state senate passed the final bill May 11, the good news traveled fast. Within five minutes, the words "We have our Commission" went out to the president of the NFB of Washington, Sue Ammeter, and others in Seattle, to activists in Spokane and throughout the state.

The governor's sister and assistant, Marion Reid, told assembled Federation members at a legislative dinner in December that when the bill was passed and signed, everyone was invited to tea in the governor's mansion. The signing and the tea that followed on May 20 were festive. Blind persons

from throughout the state shouldered their way into the governor's office to share in the signing.

Governor Ray signed two copies of the bill that day—the print copy required by law and a special Braille edition supplied by President Ammeter. Although the governor was assured that she would not be required to read the Braille copy, her penned name on it serves as a symbol of the work done by many over several years to bring the idea of a Commission in Washington into a working reality. And it was a sign that in the years to come there would be an involvement by even more blind Washingtonians as the need to build a strong and beneficial Commission is realized.

The passage of the Washington Commission bill should serve as an impetus and encouragement to Federationists around the nation who are attempting to pass similar legislation.

In an interview broadcast by Radio Reading Service in Seattle, NFBW President Ammeter stressed to the blind community that "Now we have the structure, the important thing is to provide input to help set policies and programs, and to see that good people are appointed."

"We have to make sure," she continued, "that the people who are appointed have a positive philosophy about blindness."

President Ammeter underlined that after the Commissioners are appointed, there

will be a necessity for continuing dialogue between the consumers and the Commission members, Director, and staff.

Dr. A. A. "Bob" Mallas, president of Management Services Associates of Austin, Texas, who testified in favor of the Commission before Washington legislators, said there was no question but that the new Commission is a major step forward for the state's blind. He said the Commission "should improve the quality and quantity of services. I'm very impressed."

"I think it's great," said NFB President Kenneth Jernigan; "it helps to set a tone, to set a climate. When you have a separate program for the blind, responsibility can be identified and services are likely to be better. This is a way to tell the rest of the country that there still is a movement toward sane and sensible programs for the blind."

The next step, he said, is to ensure that the agency stays responsive. "I believe it will do that. In any case, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

President Jernigan expressed the need now for the state's blind consumers to create an active interest in the agency they helped to create.

"All I can say is, sic 'em," he said.

The Washingtonians will indeed sic 'em if their future is as filled with the type of enthusiastic activism that has typified past years. □

FURTHER NAC MONOTONY

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, April 29, 1977.

Dr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,
*President, National Federation of the Blind,
Des Moines, Iowa*

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: We regret that you have once more refused our invitation to participate in NAC.

We hope that some day you will join with others in the field on behalf of better services for all blind and visually handicapped Americans through standards and accreditation.

Very truly yours,

ARMAND P. LECO,
Chairman, Nominations Committee.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
Des Moines, Iowa, May 20, 1977.

Mr. ARMAND LECO,
National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving the Blind
and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.

DEAR MR. LECO: With respect to the first sentence in your letter, I didn't; and you don't. The rest of it is the usual platitude.

Monotonously yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President, National Federation of the Blind

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, May 3, 1977.

Dr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President, National Federation of the Blind,
Des Moines, Iowa.

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: Your recent exchange of correspondence with Armand Leco has come to my attention. Several statements in your letter of April 13 prompt this clarifying note.

As you know, Mr. Leco, the chairman of our nominations committee, invited you in his letter of April 6 to suggest candidates for our board of directors. He expressed the hope that you might do so this year, despite your refusal of previous invitations because of your demand to appoint ten persons to our board.

I was amazed to read in your reply that you deny making this demand.

The report of the ad hoc committee to which you refer was read at a special NAC membership meeting attended by NFB representatives. No objection to the statements in the report was made then or later by any NFB representative who heard it read and sat in on the discussion and action the following day.

The report includes the following statement:

"... The Committee developed a plan

under which the presidents of the three national organizations of the blind would submit lists of names in excess of the total number of open board positions. Working from these lists, the board would then elect representatives from these consumer organization lists to fill the number of open board positions. . . . When the general meeting (with NFB) resumed, the committee presented this concept which was not accepted by Ken Jernigan on the basis that it did not insure adequate representation of NFB. He stated, again, that one of his minimum conditions was that NAC's board should consist of not more than 39 members and that organizations of the blind should elect at least 13 members, with NFB electing 10, ACB electing 2, and BVA electing 1."

This is about as clear as it can be.

You also state that NAC and NFB members worked out "a written agreement" containing your demands. According to the same committee report referred to above the chairman of the ad hoc committee made the following opening statement when the committee met with you and other NFB representatives on September 21, 1974:

"We come in open, good faith to attempt to settle the problem between NFB and NAC. Our instructions are to bring back our recommendations to NAC. This committee cannot make decisions . . ."

The ad hoc committee had no power to make an agreement between NFB and NAC and it made this clear before your discussions began.

What the committee did agree on was to take back proposals and recommend them to NAC. This it did.

Certain proposals were acceptable to all committee members. These were unanimously recommended, although it was presented to NAC's membership since the committee had agreed to do so. However, the demand was shown to be contrary to the corporation law of New York; it was also considered highly offensive by the other two national organizations of blind persons.

The ad hoc committee report included another statement which highlights the situation:

"Several times during the meeting of September 21, 1974, Mr. Jernigan stated that, if the points in the attached memorandum were agreed to by NAC, he would throw his whole support behind NAC. He also stated, on the other hand, that if the points were not agreed to by NAC, he would do everything in his power to destroy NAC. The major difference between the desires of ACB, BVA, and NFB is the quota desired by NFB."

Our president, Louis H. Rives, warmly supported the bylaws amendment which extended consumer membership on NAC's board. It was he who made the motion (which was approved) that the board express to the nominations committee the board's desire that the committee should be mindful of the relative sizes of the various organizations of the blind in preparing its slate of board candidates. In many other ways he has taken the lead in modifying NAC's structure and methods to involve more consumers. We only regret that NFB, alone of the three groups that advised the ad hoc committee, chose to make a non-negotiable demand and resorted to threats when its demand was not accepted by others.

Life moves on, however. NFB is still most welcome to participate in NAC's work on the same basis as other organizations of blind people. We hope you will.

Sincerely,

RICHARD W. BLEECKER, Ed. D.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
Des Moines, Iowa, May 20, 1977.

Dr. RICHARD BLEECKER,
National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving the Blind
and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.

DEAR DR. BLEECKER: Your letter of May 3, 1977, is another one of those written for

the record, but I wonder if you realize exactly what type of record it establishes. You attempt to disprove my statements to Mr. Leco by pointing to the report of NAC's own ad hoc committee to the NAC Board, and then you go on to say that (although a Federation representative was present) the report was not challenged. You do not prove that a thing is true by bringing as evidence a report of yourself to yourself. In the first place Federation representatives at NAC Board meetings are not free to take the floor and speak when they will, regardless of the falsity of statements which are being made at the time. Then, there is another matter: So very much of what is said at the NAC Board meetings (especially concerning the organized blind movement) is false that it proves absolutely nothing when you say that we did not challenge a particular piece of misinformation. If our representatives had tried to call attention to every false and misleading statement and implication made by NAC members and committees at your board meetings, the disturbance would be so continuous that it would create the very kind of disruption you constantly say we try to promote.

Let us come to the facts concerning the ad hoc committee. I have in my possession a document in the handwriting of Mr. Jack Birch (who, as you may recall, was a member of your ad hoc committee) containing the full text of the committee report. The document was given to me in the presence of witnesses by Mr. Birch when he and the other members of your committee were in Des Moines. It says nothing about "demands." It sets forth the text of an agreement.

You now tell me that the NAC committee had no power to make any agreements, and you attempt to prove this by saying that the committee reported at a NAC Board meeting that it told us that it had no such power. Very few are likely to be impressed by your logic.

I tell you that there are public statements to the contrary that can be verified. At a meeting of the National Advisory Commit-

tee on Services for the Blind, which was held in Washington a few months prior to our meeting with NAC's committee in Des Moines. Mr. Howard Hanson (a member of the NAC ad hoc committee) said that unless NAC reformed, a number of people (he among them) would resign from NAC. There were a great many people in the room when he said this.

Both Mr. Hanson and Mr. Rives (the current president of NAC) said in Des Moines that they felt the committee report was reasonable and would cease associating with NAC if the report was not accepted. NAC rejected the report, and Mr. Rives and Mr. Hanson did not do what they said they would do.

Surely, however, all of this is beside the point. NAC must be desperate, indeed, if it feels so shaky that it must constantly quibble and deny and try to build the record.

As the Scriptures say, the wicked flee when no man pursueth. I suppose it follows that the wicked would go into an absolute panic if somebody were actually on their trail—which, of course, is the case in the present instance.

NAC's sorry record is built, and nothing in the world can change it. I remind you of the words of the poet:

*The moving finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.*

Certainly NAC has cause for tears aplenty, but the words of the poet are as true today as they were in years gone by.

Repetitiously yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President, National Federation of the Blind. □

THE STEVEN HENRY CASE

Occasionally we are all asked the question, Why the National Federation of the Blind? We know that there are at least 50,000 answers. One answer is the case of Steven Henry, of Westwego, Louisiana.

His story is fairly typical. He is a talented man who all his life has faced the effects of the public's misconceptions about blindness. Those misconceptions have been reinforced in his state, as they have been in too many others, by a state agency wedded to the practices of custodialism. But as a Federationist, Steven Henry knows that he is a capable human being. He knows that he can compete on terms of equality with sighted members of society.

Steve Henry was born blind on the last day of 1948; his blindness was a result of retrolental fibroplasia. But blindness did not prevent him from doing very well in school and excelling in music. He graduated second in his class at the Louisiana State School for the Blind in 1967. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in music from

Louisiana Tech University in 1971, graduating with a 3.27 average, well within the top one-fifth of his class. He went on to study for a master's degree in music at Louisiana State University, and completed all of the requirements except the thesis.

During the time he was working on his master's degree, he married and seriously began to consider employment prospects that could support a family.

He found that his state's rehabilitation agency would not aid him for the period of time necessary to complete his master's thesis. Without the thesis he could not earn the degree, and without the degree his chances for employment in the field of music were slim. Even with the degree, they were far from good.

So he left school and spent three months looking for work. After despairing of the chances of finding employment in the private sector, he decided to take the Civil Service tests for which he met the requirements. However, of the 18 tests for which

he was eligible, his rehab counselor from Blind Services of Louisiana would let him take only three—Radio Operator I, Dictaphone Typist, and Tourist Representative. Significantly, these positions were the lowest paid of the 18. Steve also discovered that even if he were to receive the top score, he would not necessarily be called for an interview if it were felt that his blindness would prevent him from doing the job.

The only thing his rehab counselor could suggest was enrollment in a computer training course. Steve rejected this idea because he knew two people who had gone through the program but still had been unable to find work.

Finally, on his own, he secured a job with Sears Roebuck, for \$240 a month, selling service contracts by telephone to persons who had bought Sears appliances. After three successful months, his job was changed from selling service contracts to selling older appliances, still over the telephone. This job required much more reading and writing, and Steve asked his rehab counselor for assistance in retaining a reader. The counselor refused, saying that he did not approve of the job and would have advised Sears not to hire Steve in the first place. Under the circumstances Steve was forced to resign.

Steve's disillusionment with the state's rehabilitation counseling then led him to consider entering this field himself. It seemed clear to him that the field badly needed persons who had experience as consumers. He spoke with the director of admissions of the Southwestern Louisiana University master's program in vocational rehabilitation counseling. The director told him that he could be accepted and that he could make a contribution to the program. Again, however, the state agency blocked his way by refusing to make available a position in which he could do his fieldwork semester.

With the possibility of entering rehab counseling foreclosed, Steve returned to his music studies at his own expense while continuing to look around for employment.

An opportunity presented itself in January 1974. Steve was interviewed by Paul Burke, postmaster of the New Orleans district. The postmaster told him that he would be hired, given the postal examination, and put on full-time in a position that would enable him to use his mind.

A day later, Julian Toups, the New Orleans area administrator for Blind Services, sent a letter to Postmaster Burke to certify that Steve was blind, qualifying him for hiring under the handicapped program. However, Toups was not satisfied to merely verify blindness, but went a step further and called attention to a "slight speech problem of little consequence." He suggested that this "problem" could be overcome if Steve were placed in a "non-stressful job." This letter ruined Steve's chances for placement in an information phone position and perhaps in other jobs as well.

A week later Toups and two Blind Services counselors made a tour of the post office to recommend work that Steve could do. They made no recommendations.

As a result, Steve was not given full-time status, but instead was put on as a clerk at 20 hours a week. His position involved answering an occasional telephone call, stuffing envelopes for annual United Way drives, typing a few stencils, placing mail in an out-going mail bin, and otherwise doing make-work jobs. Many times he was told to save some work in case someone came into the office.

This situation continued with little variation for three years. Several times Steve sought to improve his status by suggesting that he be allowed to work with employees who were taking courses at the Postal Employees Development Center or that he be considered for the positions of Information Representative or Postal Manual Policy Interoffice Consultant. He also took the Professional and Administrative Career Examination, qualifying him for work at the GS-5 and GS-7 levels. But it was all to no avail.

Meanwhile he watched as other workers at his level with less seniority got more

hours than he. In fact, even workers below his level, the casual employees, often worked more than the 20 hours a week that he was allowed.

However, over these three years Steve and his wife, Libby, became more and more involved in the Federation. They attended the National Convention in Los Angeles, in July 1976, and returned more ready than ever to fight for Steve's rights. As Libby Henry wrote to President Jernigan, on September 3, 1976:

"Again, we want to thank you for the dignity NFB has restored and for the opportunity to become involved in this tremendous movement. We certainly can see that now is the critical period of time when we must move swiftly and surely to end discrimination and put-downs which damage the dignity, hamper the opportunity, and deny the security. We are personally proud to be a part of the movement and will continue to put forth Federationism wherever we go."

They decided to try every legal means to overcome the discrimination Steve was facing. Libby wrote to her U.S. Representative, Congresswoman Lindy Boggs. Steve filed a discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), even though its authority does not specifically cover discrimination against the handicapped. Finally, with the help of the New Orleans local of the American Postal Workers Union, Steve filed a grievance under the provisions of the labor-management contract. The contract's article II was clearly applicable to his case. It barred discrimination on the basis of "a physical handicap with respect to a position the duties of which can be performed efficiently by an individual with such a physical handicap without danger to the health and safety of the physically handicapped person or to others."

The post office initially reacted negatively to Steve's efforts. In October and again in January he was denied his periodic pay increase because of "unsatisfactory performance." Steve, however, filed a separate

grievance against this denial, and the post office backed down.

He lost his EEOC claim, as he expected, but he also lost his discrimination grievance at both the local and regional levels, which he did not expect. But he fought on. Libby Henry again contacted Congresswoman Boggs. And with the help of Alvin Patterson and Peggy Gannon of his local union, Steve appealed the grievance decision to the national level.

Gradually the situation improved. In March, Steve's hours were expanded to 40 without any explanation. At the national level the American Postal Workers Union staff took great interest in the case and agreed to move it along as rapidly as possible despite an enormous backlog of cases. They also indicated they would push for a decision that, at the very least, would authorize the NFB to survey the New Orleans Post Office for work for which Steve is qualified.

But again, the decision on the grievance complaint, when it was handed down early this summer, was against Steve. It was found that his advancement depended on an ability to read. Now the union is not interested in pursuing the case further.

But as with the McNutt case which was reported in the June 1977 *Monitor*, a suit can now be brought under the non-discrimination provisions of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Which brings us back to the question, Why the NFB. The Federation is planning to take up the case and institute a lawsuit on Steven Henry's behalf. Whether we will be able to pursue the case as far as is needed to achieve victory depends, of course, on whether we have the funds to do so. But as long as we are able, we must fight in situations such as this, for they could happen to any one of us. Indeed, situations like this do occur every day. And although others—such as the Postal Workers Union—will lend support for a while, too often blind people are left with only the support of their own organization. So, why the National Federation of the Blind? This is the answer. □

THE NFB OF NORTH CAROLINA SAYS NO TO "HAPPY HOME FOR THE BLIND"

by HARVEY HEAGY

Some people simply refuse to learn the lessons which the NFB has sought for 37 years to bring home to both the public and to agencies serving the blind. Now a small group of North Carolina citizens are engaged in a project which, if carried out, will do incalculable harm to the blind of this state and the nation. Last summer, a group known as the Western Carolina Lions, Inc., under the direction of Arnold Hyde, began actively seeking funds for a project called "Happy Home for the Blind." This facility, which is to be built in a remote area near Black Mountain, North Carolina, located in the mountains in the western part of the state, is to provide a permanent residence for a maximum of 40 people when it is completed, sometime in the summer of 1978.

As local Federationists see it, this project is nothing more than an excuse for misinformed do-gooders to open another avenue through which sighted persons can control the lives of blind persons. It should also be pointed out that Mr. Hyde and his troop of custodians have received no sanction from Lions International or any of the local Lions Club affiliates for this project, yet they are using the name of the Lions to promote the demeaning project.

The project first came to the attention of the NFB of North Carolina when state president Hazel Staley received a call from Mr. Hyde shortly after the 1976 Convention, requesting the Federation's support for "Happy Home." Not only did Mrs. Staley refuse to commit the Federation's support to this undertaking, but upon learning that this corporation had applied to the Farmers Home Administration for a loan to begin construction, she promptly wrote the agency to register the Federation's formal protest.

For a while, it appeared that Federationists had triumphed. The Farmers Home Administration wrote the Western Carolina

Lions and informed them it was reluctant to grant a loan to any controversial project. Obviously upset by this bold assertion by the blind of their independence and the fundamental right to control their own lives, Mr. Hyde recontacted Mrs. Staley and all but begged her to come up and see this false utopia which was envisioned for the blind. He felt that once she had done this, she would write to the Farmers Home Administration and retract her protest. In true Federation tradition, Mrs. Staley refused to do this. She further stated that, although the Federation wanted nothing to do with this ridiculous project, Mr. Hyde could come to Charlotte and talk to her about it, which he did.

When she met with Mr. Hyde, Mrs. Staley pointed out NFB's philosophical objections to Happy Home, stating that whether Mr. Hyde liked it or not, the blind could and would run their own lives without interference. She also pointed out the genuine impracticalities of a Happy Home for the Blind. She stated that the construction site was in the middle of nowhere; that a blind person residing there had *better* be happy because there was nothing within five miles on either side. Also, she asked, how did Mr. Hyde plan to provide adequate medical attention to the residents? How would transportation be provided to shopping facilities? How would such a mammoth complex be financed? And how would this complex help the blind person to be integrated into the mainstream of society?

To most questions, Mr. Hyde replied that the details had not been worked out; and he said, "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it." However, like Clovernook and other such homes, operating expenses were to be met by confiscating the residents' SSI checks, regardless of the amount, and returning a pittance for spending money. Like the Clovernook case, this leaves open

the possibility for the sighted staff to misrepresent the amount of an individual's check. The residents might not suspect anything was up.

But on the practical side, Federationists pointed out that merely the salaries of cooks, maids, groundskeepers, and the cost of utilities would quickly gobble up SSI checks even if the practice they planned to use were ethical. Mr. Hyde used his usual crutch: "We'll work that out when we get there." As for transportation, Mr. Hyde said that a local group of volunteers had agreed to take these poor helpless blind persons to church every Sunday; but nothing else was worked out. How would those capable of working be able to secure employment? Mr. Hyde's answer was (you guessed it): Ultimately, the corporation planned to open a sheltered workshop on the grounds, probably paying subminimum wages, and with large salaries for sighted fat-cat managers who look upon the blind as no more than society's dogs who must accept whatever scraps are thrown their way.

Well, the project's fundraising proceeded, with local people kicking in funds which, at last estimate, totaled nearly \$165,000. But the biggest setback to the Federation came recently when the political clout of the Hyde family won out over the wishes

of the blind. The Farmers Home Administration has now approved the loan for construction of this disgraceful and demeaning facility which can only do disservice to the blind. Construction is to begin in July of this year, with the opening date targeted for July 1978.

If this home is brought into reality, Federationists fear that eventually Mr. Hyde and others like him will go not only to local Lions Clubs, but to the state legislature to secure funds for this wasteful and unnecessary project. This, of course, would take needed funds away from legitimate rehabilitation projects. They say this will not happen, but experience has taught Federationists better. We call on Lions Club affiliates not to support this project in any way. We further charge the state legislature to turn deaf ears to any requests by this corporation for money; and most important, we call on Federationists nationwide to write letters of protest to the Farmers Home Administration to ensure that nothing like this ever happens again, and to seek cancellation of the loan.

Federationists will do whatever is necessary to stop the spread of custodialism and to stop those who—however well-meaning their intentions—would seek to control the lives of the blind. □

VIRGINIA CONVENTION

by DAWNELLE CRUSE

The 19th annual convention of the NFB of Virginia was held the weekend of March 18-20 in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It was admirably hosted by the Skyline Chapter. We were especially pleased to welcome representatives of the newly formed chapter in Norfolk.

On Saturday morning, John Taylor, the NFB national representative, spoke to us. He stressed the need for supporting the work of the NFB financially through the PAC Plan and through other contributions. Alan Schlank, NFBV president, discussed current

conditions at the state level. Charlie Brown, chairman of the legislative committee, reported on the status of the Magnolia Lyons case. Ms. Lyons was denied medical service by a doctor because of her guide dog. The case is now before the Virginia Supreme Court. Mr. Brown also discussed a bill which would extend the coverage of the White Cane Law in Virginia. This bill has since been signed into law by the governor.

Jimmy Nelson gave the liaison committee report and stressed his wish for a better relationship with the Virginia Commission

for the Visually Handicapped. After lunch, Frank Penland, director of educational services for VCVH, spoke to us. He was unable to satisfy us about why many blind persons coming out of the Virginia public schools are not proficient in Braille and other skills. Jim Gashel presented the national legislative report and then joined Alan Schlank and John Taylor for an open discussion of any issues Federationists wished to raise.

That night, at the banquet, a \$200 schol-

arship was presented to Carol Gunter of the Richmond chapter, and Nancy Hoover received the Marion J. Kelley Award for outstanding service. The major address was presented by John Taylor.

At the Sunday morning business session, resolutions were adopted. Alan Schlank was elected delegate to the National Convention, and Nancy Hoover was elected alternate. Mr. Robert Shropshire was elected treasurer of the NFBV Federal Credit Union. □

TEXAS CONVENTION

by PEGGY MELTON

The 1977 convention of the NFB of Texas was held in Dallas March 25-27. A Friday evening business session set the pace for a working convention. A resolution was passed for a special election of all NFBT officers. The results of the election were as follows: president, Glenn Crosby; first vice-president, Walter Musler; second vice-president, Louis Vinson; secretary, Peggy Melton; treasurer, Malcolm Coney; and board members, Judy Watford, Myrtie Payne, J. Q. Sutherlin, and Manuel Gonzales. The delegate to the NFB Convention is Glenn Crosby, the alternate is Walter Musler.

Charles Raeke, program chairman, provided a very good lineup of speakers for Saturday. They were: Burt Risley, Executive Director, Texas Commission for the Blind; Dr. Robert Winn, Executive Director of the governor's coordinating office for

the visually handicapped; state representative Eddie Bernice Johnson; and several others.

We were honored to have with us Sue Ammeter and Ralph Sanders as national NFB representatives. Sue gave a very inspiring banquet address. Two new chapters were welcomed into the affiliate—the Bexas County Chapter of San Antonio, and the Greater Houston Chapter.

The highpoints of the Sunday morning business session were the resolutions and reports from chapter presidents. We quadrupled our PAC Plan pledges from Texas and collected \$101.50 toward support of our National Office. The convention closed with a tired but excited group of Federationists leaving for home with determination to work together to build a bigger and stronger Texas affiliate of the NFB. □

HAWAII CONVENTION

by DON THOMSON

The tenth annual convention of the Hawaii Federation of the Blind was held in Honolulu April 1-3. Guests from the mainland included James and Sharon Omvig from Iowa (Mr. Omvig was national NFB representative) and Benny and Norma Parrish from California.

The convention opened Friday night with an analytical discussion of Federationism

led by Jim Omvig.

State president Warren Toyama gave the convention to order on Saturday morning, and state senator George Toyofuku, who has just introduced a resolution in the senate calling for another study of Hawaii's vocational rehabilitation programs to be conducted by the NFB, gave a short talk. Other presentations during the day were by

Beatrice Higuchi, newly appointed director of state rehabilitation programs for the blind; Wilfred Morimoto, from the state vending stand program; and Jim Omvig, discussing national developments.

Federationist Benny Parrish, who is employed in the regional SSI office in San Francisco, talked about the SSI program both Saturday and Sunday. Benny Parrish and Jim Omvig ably handled the duties of featured luncheon and banquet speakers

respectively.

The officers elected for the coming year are: Warren Toyama, president and Convention delegate; Filo Tu, vice-president; Clarence Aina, corresponding secretary; Joe Peters, recording secretary; and Amelia Citrone, treasurer. The board members are Albert Auyong, Don Thomson, Norman Ota, and Valerie Moreno. Everyone who attended felt that it was a highly successful convention. □

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CONVENTION

The 1977 convention of the NFB of the District of Columbia was held Friday and Saturday, April 29 and 30.

Our major project at present is a bill to create a D.C. Commission for the Blind. D.C. councilman Arrington Dickson, who introduced our bill, spoke to us and indicated his strong support. Stephen Gambara, who is in charge of all rehabilitation programs in the District, including programs for the blind, has doubts about a Commission, but said he would not oppose it and welcomes the effect our campaign is likely to have in focusing attention on rehab programs.

We had a long discussion with Charles Fegan, director of the NAC-accredited Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind. The Lighthouse pays subminimum wages to its workers, and reportedly applies intimidation to keep them from unionizing or protesting publicly about conditions in the shop. Mr. Fegan responded with double-talk to our pointed questions about his affiliation with NAC. Although the accreditation of the Lighthouse should have expired 18 months ago, the agency is still listed by NAC as accredited, and no on-site inspection has been held. This shows—if it still needs to be shown—that NAC is more interested in adding to and keeping names on its public

lists than it is in enforcing its standards. Mr. Fegan also revealed that he had been urged to attack a program in Ohio which chose to be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) rather than by NAC. He raised the example to say that he did not accede to the urging—hoping to show by this that he was not totally aligned with NAC—but when he was asked who had urged him to attack the Ohio program, he refused to answer. Not that we need an answer—the tactic is familiar to Federationists. The Lighthouse moved to a new \$2 million facility recently, and it held a secret opening to avoid the NFB pickets and TV cameramen who had attended the groundbreaking for the building. If Mr. Fegan thinks we can be put off by such evasions, he had better think again.

The banquet Saturday night had 60 Federationists and guests in attendance. The speaker was Ted Young, who was also NFB national representative. Josephine Stuart was re-elected president; first vice-president is Paul Kay; second vice-president, Charles Fields; secretary, Arlene Gashel; treasurer, Lloyd Rasmussen; and our newly elected board members are Harold Snider and Reginald Greenwood. The hardworking convention chairwoman was Mrs. Jenny Fletcher. □

NEW JERSEY CONVENTION

by SHARON KELLY

This last was a year of reorganization and growth for the NFB of New Jersey. The attendance and participation at our first annual convention proves this point.

Our convention was held May 6-8 in Newark. On Saturday morning, we heard President Worthington's report, chapter reports, and a speech from our NFB national representative, Ralph Sanders.

This was the first New Jersey convention at which any person could speak from the floor. Members took full advantage of this right. During the afternoon session, there were two panel discussions. The members of the first panel were Mrs. Sanford of the Social Security Administration; Mr. Wencil, who is supervisor of vocational services at the New Jersey Commission for the Blind; Mr. Haj of the U.S. Civil Service Commission; and Ralph Sanders.

As master of ceremonies at the banquet,

Ted Young put everyone in the proper spirit. A special highlight of this evening was the presentation of charters to five affiliates of the NFB of New Jersey by President Worthington. The affiliates are NFB Business Enterprises, NFB of Northern New Jersey, NFB North Jersey Coast, NFB Central Jersey, and NFB South Jersey.

At the Sunday morning business meeting, the following officers were elected: James Sofka, first vice-president; Lewis Griffin, second vice-president; and Doris Parnofiello and Sharon Kelly, board members. Hold-over officers are Joseph Worthington, president; Helen Hart, secretary; Ward Biondi, treasurer; and Thomas Blume and Barry Wood, board members.

Our first annual convention was a tremendous success. As we left Newark, we were filled with enthusiasm and dedication to the goals of the NFB. □

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

by CLYDE FRIEND

Note: Mr. Friend is a member of the NFB of Pennsylvania and an avid cook. He also likes to correspond by means of cassette and invites any Federationists who are also interested in this to correspond with him. His address is 188 Foreman Road, Freeport, Pennsylvania 16221.

RIPE TOMATO RELISH

Ingredients

6 large ripe tomatoes	½ cup salt
6 green peppers	4 cups sugar
6 red peppers	3 cups vinegar
4 cups celery (cut into pieces)	½ cup mustard seed
4 cups onions (also cut into pieces)	

Grind together through a food chopper the tomatoes, red peppers, green peppers, celery, and onions. Add the salt and mix together thoroughly. Cover and let stand overnight. The next day, drain thoroughly. Then add the remaining ingredients - vinegar, sugar, and mustard seed. Place in jars and cover with lids cold. This does not need to be cooked or pressurized, and it will keep for years. It can be used on all meats - roast beef, hamburgers, hotdogs - or on bread and butter as a preserve. □

MONITOR MINIATURES □□□□□□□□

□ Robert Herman, of 948 Pennoyer Street, Grand Haven, Michigan 49417, sent the following letter to the *Monitor*: "In the May 1977 edition of the *Monitor* you published a letter that I wrote to Dr. Jernigan. The letter dealt with the financial situation of our movement. Mine was the one that advocated belt-tightening. For reasons that I can understand very well, you did not publish my name. Therefore, the purpose of this letter is to ask you to do so at your earliest opportunity. The reason that I would like my name and address published is that I would like to receive reactions and comments from Federationists around the country. Letters may be sent in Braille, in print, or on cassette tape."

□ The NFB of Indiana is offering a \$100 scholarship to a legally blind person who has graduated from high school and plans to attend college. If you wish to apply, send the following information: name, address, age, name of high school and scholastic record, name of college you attend or plan to attend, credits earned (if any), marriage status, and number of children (if any). Applications should be sent before September 1, 1977, to Russell Getz, 321 North Main Street, Goshen, Indiana 46526. The scholarship will be awarded at the NFB convention in November.

□ The Iowa Commission for the Blind is seeking the services of two additional paid proofreaders. Blind proofreaders holding an A certificate who desire further information should contact Duane Gerstenberger, Iowa Commission for the Blind, 4th and Keo,

Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

□ The Sunshine Chapter, NFB of Florida, is looking for a tele-touch machine for a member. If you have such a machine which you would be willing to donate or sell at a reasonable price, contact Mrs. Gertrude Sitt, 15741 Northeast 14th Avenue, North Miami Beach, Florida 33162.

□ Paul Kay, a lawyer and a member of the D.C. affiliate, is preparing an article on discrimination against the blind. He wishes to collect information about local ordinances and statutes concerning such discrimination, as well as instances and kinds of discrimination members have encountered. His address is 800 Fourth Street Southwest, Apartment S-317, Washington, D.C. 20024; phone: (202) 488-3984.

□ The Associates Travel Program of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., has announced a program for blind persons (and sighted companions, if they wish) at the National Air and Space Museum, the weekend of October 28-30, under the direction of Federationist Harold Snider. Information and study materials will be sent prior to this time in Braille or on tape. The group will also visit the Kennedy Center and the storage and restoration facility of the museum at Silver Hill. For more information, contact the Associates Travel Program, A&I 1270-B, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, or call (202) 381-381-5635.

□ The Perkins Alumni Association is offering a record album of anthems and hymns sung by the Alumni Association. Titled "Echoes from Perkins Chapel, the album

PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN (Instructions on back of the card)

I hereby authorize the National Federation of the Blind to draw a check to its own order in the amount of \$_____ on the _____ day of each month payable to its own order. This authorization will remain in effect until revoked by me in writing and until such notice is actually received.

X

Bank signature of donor (both signatures if two are necessary)

Address

We understand that your bank has agreed to cooperate in our pre-authorized check plan on behalf of your depositor. Attached is your client's signed authorization to honor such checks drawn by us.

Customer's account and your bank transit numbers will be MICR-printed on checks per usual specifications before they are deposited. Our Indemnification Agreement is on the reverse side of the signed authorization.

AUTHORIZATION TO HONOR CHECKS DRAWN BY NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Name of depositor as shown on bank records _____ Acct. No. _____
Name of bank and branch, if any, and address of branch where account is maintained _____

For my benefit and convenience, I hereby request and authorize you to pay and charge to my account checks drawn on my account by the National Federation of the Blind to its own order. This authorization will remain in effect until revoked by me in writing, and until you actually receive such notice I agree that you shall be fully protected in honoring any such check. In consideration of your compliance with such request and authorization, I agree that your treatment of each check, and your rights in respect to it shall be the same as if it were signed personally by me and that if any such check be dishonored, whether with or without cause, you shall be under no liability whatsoever. The National Federation of the Blind is instructed to forward this authorization to you.

X

Bank signature of customer (both signatures if two are necessary)

Date

costs \$6.60, and is a means of memorializing the Perkins Chorus and the music they have sung over the years. To obtain the album, write to Gene Raschi, 20 Winslow Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts 02144.

□ Here's a tape correspondence club with a new twist. There are no printed publications or directory—it's all on tape. To join now and get the current publication and directory, send \$2, a 90-minute tape, and a self-addressed return envelope to: Tapeople, 2114 - 18th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79401.

□ Stephen Benson, first vice-president of the NFB of Illinois and president of the Chicago Chapter, has been selected by the United States Jaycees as "an outstanding young man of America for 1977, in recognition of outstanding professional achievement, superior leadership ability, and exceptional service to the community." Steve has also been recently appointed editor of "The Month's News," the publication of the NFB of Illinois.

□ Connecticut has another chapter. This spring the Stamford Area Chapter of the NFB of Connecticut came into being. Its president is Mary Main; the vice-president is George Eltgroth; and the treasurer is Carol Lowe, all of Stamford.

□ A seventh George Washington Honor Medal was presented to the Twin Vision Publishing Division of the American Brotherhood for the Blind at its annual awards dinner on March 25. The award was given for the latest in the Great Documents Series: Presidents of the United States. At the dinner a memorial service was held for Anthony Mannino, until his death the

executive director and treasurer of the ABB. The Twin Vision Golden Book Award was presented to Tony's sister, Mary Catalano.

□ Here is a fundraising idea which the NFB affiliate in Missouri used to celebrate White Cane Week. It comes to us in a letter from Rhoda Dower, state fundraising chairperson: "We picked May 13 and obtained the use of a savings and loan hospitality room free of charge. We invited all our members and friends to attend. Each woman prepared a box supper for two, packed in a box which was wrapped and decorated. The night of the social, the men bid on the dinners and had the pleasure of sharing the one they bought with the lady who prepared it. We also purchased beer and soda to sell at a small profit, and someone donated coffee, which was also sold. We used records for dancing and also set up a White Elephant booth. All profits went to the National Treasury."

□ Jesse Williamson, a Federationist in Morgantown, North Carolina, was featured in an article in his local paper which was later condensed and syndicated by the Associated Press. Jesse is a graduate student in psychology, and a basketball coach. Here are some quotes from the article:

"Williamson has been totally blind for ten years. Still, he is an assistant coach with the Western Piedmont Community College basketball team and a large part of the team's harmony. . . . 'I love the sport and I just like being with these guys,' Williamson says. 'Sure, I happen to be blind, but that doesn't stop me. You have to grab what you want and go with it.'" □

NFB PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN. This is a way for you to contribute a set amount to the NFB each month. The amount you pledge will be drawn from your account automatically. On the other side of this card, fill in the amount you want to give each month and the day of the month you want it to be drawn from your account. Sign the card in two places, where the X's are. The rest will be filled in by the NFB Treasurer. Enclose a voided check with the card, and mail it to Richard Edlund, Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind, Box 11185, Kansas City, Kansas 66111. Your bank will send you receipts for your contributions with your regular bank statements. You can increase (or decrease) your monthly payments by filling out a new PAC Plan card and mailing it to the Treasurer. Also, more PAC Plan cards are available from the Treasurer.

INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

To bank named on the reverse side:

In consideration of your compliance with the request and authorization of the depositor named on the reverse side, the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND will refund to you any amount erroneously paid by you to The National Federation of the Blind on any such check if claim for the amount of such erroneous payment is made by you within twelve months from the date of the check on which such erroneous payment was made.

Authorized in a resolution adopted by the Board Members
of the National Federation of the Blind on November 28, 1974

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

BY: _____
Treasurer

THE BRAILLE MONITOR
218 RANDOLPH HOTEL BLDG.
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 581
DES MOINES, IOWA